

The Farleys were not alone in their desire to provide U.S. soldiers with proper equipment. A national initiative—Operation Helmet—was underway and the Farleys quickly sought to localize the effort. Mrs. Farley made up signs asking for donations and put one of those signs at the Quakertown Moose Lodge. That is where the project took off. After learning about the need for the protective pads, Rodney Van Pelt of the Moose Club joined the Farleys to aggressively pursue the goal of equipping Michael's entire unit with the upgrade. The Moose Club and the rest of the community rallied around the family and raised enough to take care of Michael's entire company, not just his unit.

As of today, the Farleys and the Quakertown Moose Club have raised \$35,000, enough for almost 500 upgrade kits. The kits have been shipped out and came as early Christmas presents for soldiers overseas. This accomplishment is inspiring and is a telling example of true patriotism and respect.

Having led convoys in a Humvee without doors while serving with the 82nd Airborne Division in Baghdad, I understand what it means to fight a war without proper equipment. So I speak from experience when I say that this kind of support from home is wholeheartedly appreciated and serves as a tremendous morale boost. But Madam Speaker, family members should not be forced to pay for their loved ones' military equipment. The Farleys were able to gather tremendous community support but despite their best efforts they couldn't supply all U.S. forces, and many families are paying out-of-pocket. This is unfair and I urge you all to support the Helmet Pad Reimbursement Act of 2007. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill because at the very least, these families should have the opportunity to request a reimbursement.

This is an issue of critical importance to our troops and I commend all who have brought it to light. On behalf of the men and women with whom I served, Mr. and Mrs. Farley, Mr. Van Pelt, the Quakertown Moose Lodge and most importantly, Michael and all the soldiers who continue to risk their lives for this country, I urge Congress to support this bill.

TRIBUTE TO HAROLD REYNDERS
FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2007

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Harold Reynders as the recent recipient of the St. Jude Medal from the Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg. A dedicated volunteer at the St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church for nearly two decades, Harold has given his time and energy to help his fellow parishioners.

Born in Lancaster, NY, Harold ran his own construction company in Buffalo for 37 years. Moving with his wife Corinne to Spring Hill, FL in 1988 in search of warmer weather, Harold began attending St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church in 1989.

Each day Harold would go to church, work throughout the sanctuary and help keep the

church neat and clean. His efforts were eventually brought to the attention of Monsignor John Cippel, who gave Harold Keys to the church and an official position as a sacristan.

For the next 10 years, Harold prepared the altar for the Mass and cleaned up following the sermon. He also was given the responsibility of opening the church doors each morning, and served as a lector and minister at the Sunday Masses.

This past November, Harold was presented with the St. Jude Medal that "honors individuals who have consistently given of themselves to living the gospel of Jesus Christ by their generosity and service." Presented on the Feast of Christ the King Day at the Cathedral of St. Jude in St. Petersburg, Harold was truly humbled to receive the honor.

Madam Speaker, Harold Reynders has spent a lifetime as a devout Catholic, working to make his parish and his church a better place to worship. He should be commended for his years of service and for being honored with the St. Jude Medal.

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2007

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2007

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, today I, together with Ranking Member MICA, Economic Development Subcommittee Chairwoman NORTON, Subcommittee Ranking Member GRAVES, and many Members who represent communities of the Appalachian region, introduce the Appalachian Regional Development Act Amendments of 2007. This bipartisan bill improves the programs authorized by the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965 and reauthorizes the Appalachian Regional Commission for five years through FY 2011.

I am proud to sponsor this bill, which builds on more than four decades of economic development successes through job creation in some of the Nation's most disadvantaged yet deserving communities. I have witnessed firsthand the triumph that is possible when the Federal Government joins in partnership with states, localities, economic development districts, and private businesses to break the cycle of crippling and pervasive poverty. It is an economic certainty that job deficiencies reduce the tax base, which reduces the ability of governments to provide public infrastructure, which further reduces the ability to create and attract new industries. Generating jobs must therefore continue to be our top priority in communities suffering economic distress, particularly in Appalachia.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) was created by the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-4) to address economic issues and social problems of the Appalachian region as a part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program. Congress created the ARC in 1965 to assist the Appalachian region "in providing the infrastructure necessary for economic and human resource development, in developing the regions' industry, in building entrepreneurial communities, in generating a diversi-

fied regional economy and in making the region's industrial and commercial resources more competitive in the national and world markets."

As a regional economic development agency, ARC's primary function is to support development of Appalachia's economy and critical infrastructure to provide a climate for industry growth and job creation. ARC includes all or part of 13 States: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Historically, the Appalachian region has faced high levels of poverty and economic distress resulting from geographic isolation and inadequate infrastructure. Since its creation in 1965, ARC has administered a variety of programs to aid in the development and advancement of the region, including the creation of a highway system, enhancements in education and job training, and the development of water and sewer systems.

ARC's funding and projects have contributed significantly to employment, health, public works, and general economic development improvements in the region. The regional poverty rate has been reduced by almost one-half. High school graduation rates have doubled, and the percentage of Appalachian students now completing high school is slightly above the national average. The infant mortality rate has been cut by two-thirds, and ARC funds have helped build more than 400 health facilities serving four million people in Appalachia.

ARC projects have also helped to construct 2,496 miles of new Federal-aid highways. In the last five years alone, ARC-funded infrastructure projects have resulted in the creation or retention of 136,000 jobs, and over 183,000 households have reaped the benefits of clean water and sanitation facilities.

Yet, our work to ensure the economic viability and vitality of the communities that are part of the ARC is far from finished. Approximately one-fifth of ARC's counties remain in a state of economic distress. One-fourth of Appalachia's counties have a poverty rate that is more than 150 percent of the national average. Additional Federal investments are necessary to build upon the progress made to date.

Specifically, this bill directs ARC to designate as "at-risk counties," which are counties in the Appalachian region that are most at risk of becoming economically distressed; establishes the maximum Federal share for Appalachian Regional Commission non-highway grant amounts for designated at-risk counties as 70 percent; authorizes additional appropriations to the Commission through FY 2011 to carry out Appalachian regional development; and extends, for five years, the termination date of the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965 (with exceptions for the Appalachian development highway system and certain definitions).

During the 107th Congress, the House passed the Appalachian Regional Development Reauthorization Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-149), which built upon past successes of the Appalachian Regional Commission, made several amendments to existing law, and extended the authorization for an additional five years.

ARC's authorization expired at the end of FY 2006. During the 109th Congress, the Committee's bipartisan leadership introduced